

Taize reflections February 10, 2019 Rev. Patricia Weatherwax

SCRIPTURE Luke 11:9-13

Luke's gospel teaches that Jesus said: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

REFLECTION ON THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER

Prayers are answered in God's time and in God's way, but humans also have the gift and power of choice and free will. We influence what happens and other people also influence what happens. This passage is often interpreted that all our prayers will be answered the way we want. Instead, consider what Jesus says. We will be given the Holy Spirit when we pray, when we ask. We remember that the spirit is our comforter and our sustainer, helping us to live with patience and faith. Our prayers are all heard. Our prayers are all answered, every one.

SCRIPTURE Matthew 11:28-39

Matthew's gospel teaches that Jesus said: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

REFLECTION ON THE DISCIPLINE OF REST

A very socially outdated proverb says: "Man may work from sun to sun, but a woman's work is never done." That is counter to the way we all were created. Jesus modeled a better way by what he said and did. He demonstrated that we were created for a rhythm of cyclic work and rest. Sometimes our work is done for now, and it's time to rest. Sometimes we need to accept our limitations. We don't ever need to fear imperfection. We will never get it all done and we will never get it all just right.

"But God has promised strength for the day.

Rest for the labor. Light for the way.

Grace for the trials. Help from above.

Unfailing kindness. Undying love."

SCRIPTURE 1 Peter 5:6-7

In the book of First Peter it is written: "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time, Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you."

REFLECTION ON THE DISCIPLINE OF SURRENDER

We know the “cast your cares” line, and are grateful. Common English translations say it more simply: Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.” God cares. What a comfort. What a source of strength. But, we often try to skip over the previous verse, the humility part. The text calls us to be humble. Instead, we try to control and correct and micromanage others and even God. When we release our tight hold on life and give our concerns to God, blessings and happy surprises may come our way. What will happen in God’s time? Poet- author Loretta P Burns penned it this way:

Broken Dreams

As children bring their broken toys
With tears for us to mend.
I brought my broken dreams to God
Because He was my Friend.

But then instead of leaving Him
In peace to work alone,
I hung around and tried to help
With ways that were my own.

At last I snatched them back and cried,
"How could You be so slow"-
"My child," He said,
"What could I do? You never did let go."

We have the opportunity every day to let go, to cast our burdens on Christ. Would we rather fret than surrender? We feel compelled to hold on tightly rather than to open our hands and hearts, to just let go. From personal experience, the times when I physically, emotionally and spiritually did this, relinquished the concern-- gave it over to God’s care, it made a significant difference in how I perceived the problem or situation from then on. Some circumstances were even resolved better than I could have imagined. And always after surrender, I felt more at peace.

If you have a burden that you know you are carrying that could be surrendered to the care of God, you have a symbolic way to do that now. Lighting the candle in prayer brings the light of Christ to the concern. Leaving the candle behind, but still lit, is a reminder that God is faithful and is involved even when we do not see. This does not guarantee that the concern will go away, only that *you* will not be carrying it when it’s God’s love that should be carrying it for you. And in that process God carries the burden and carries you. Thanks be to God!